



Canadian Irish Studies Foundation

FUNDAMENTALS

Announcement

Canadian Irish Studies Foundation

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\$3 Million For Canadian Irish Studies

Will Fund Prestigious Chair Named after Johnson Family

Premier Jean Charest delighted the more than five hundred guests at the March 17 luncheon of the Montreal St. Patrick's Society when he announced that the Government of Quebec would donate \$2 million to the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation. Adding icing to the cake was the announcement from the Concordia University Foundation of its \$1 million



Brian O'Neill Gallery (Chair, Canadian Irish Studies Foundation), Jean Charest (Premier of Quebec) and Michael Kenneally (Director, Centre for Canadian Irish Studies)

contribution, so that a permanent endowment of \$3 million would be created. The annual income from the endowment will fund a prestigious Chair in Canadian Irish Studies named in honour of the Johnson family.

The Premier said that he was pleased to respond to the request from the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation for support for a Chair and was delighted with the suggestion of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation that this high-profile Chair in Canadian Irish Studies be named after the Johnson family. In his account of the deep-rooted role of the Irish in all aspects of Quebec life, Premier Charest said that the Johnson were the most illustrious Irish-Quebecers. To have three Premiers, representing three different political parties, come from one family was unique in Quebec and perhaps so in the entire world.

The donation of \$1 million from the Concordia University Foundation was announced by President Michael Di Grappa, on behalf of Kathy Assayag, President of the Concordia University Foundation, and its Vice-President, Brian Edwards.

The \$3 million endowment will generate an annual income for a high-profile professor with an international reputation who will attract graduate students and research funding to the University. Premier Charest went on to say that the Johnson Chair in Canadian Irish Studies would become the centre-piece of Canadian Irish Studies as the discipline developed within the University.

On behalf of the Johnson family, I would like to say that we are all deeply honoured by this public recognition of our Irish roots and our contribution to public life in Quebec.

- Daniel Johnson

He spoke proudly of his own Irish-Quebec roots and of wide spectrum of accomplishments of the approximately 40% of Quebec who can trace some Irish ancestry. He also thanked all those associated with the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation, especially its Chair, Brian O'Neill Gallery, and Executive Director, Michael Kenneally for their many years of dedication so that generations of students will be able to learn about the Irish heritage, especially the story of the Irish in Montreal, Quebec and Canada.

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Brian O'Neill Gallery, Daniel Johnson, Jean Charest, Michael Di Grappa, Kathy Assayag, Michael Kenneally

Mieux connaître la contribution des Irlandais à l'histoire du Québec, c'est donc mieux comprendre ce que nous sommes comme peuple.

Aujourd'hui, mon gouvernement pose un geste en faveur d'une meilleure connaissance de cet héritage fondateur de l'identité québécoise.

***- Jean Charest,
Premier Ministre du Québec***

Dr. Kenneally stated that this announcement will give added impetus to expand the program in Canadian Irish Studies and to hire other professors so that the permanence of the program will be ensured. "We have now turned an important corner," Kenneally said, "and I am confident that the announcement of the Johnson Chair will help us move forward to expand the program in various ways."

In thanking Premier Charest for this extraordinarily generous support, Brian Gallery said that the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation was profoundly grateful and touched by this achievement. "We have worked and dreamed for so long for this day that I can hardly control my emotions," Gallery said. He also extended special thanks to the members of St. Patrick's Society who first believed in this project,

and contributed more than \$150,000 over the years towards that dream, and he went on to speak of the unique and exceptional cooperation received from Concordia University, evidenced by the \$1 million contribution from its own Foundation. Gallery went on to say that "This will mean the dawning of a new day for Canadian Irish Studies but we hope that there will be other such days in the future. But for now, our job is to thank each and every one of our supporters and all those at Concordia who have brought us this far. We should all take a bow, rest for a little while, and then we will begin to plan for the future."

"Daniel Johnson recalled fondly how proudly his family celebrated their Irish heritage, especially on St. Patrick's Day, when grandfather Frank and his brother John would feature prominently in the traditional parade down Main Street in Richmond. He also spoke of the special place that Ireland held in his own heart, noting that on his several trips to Ireland he immediately felt a sense of belonging, a special attachment to the landscape and the people. That special relationship is evident in the ties of religion, music, dance and culture that connect Ireland with Quebec and are the bond that unite those of Irish ancestry in Quebec with their French brothers and sisters."

From humble beginnings in 2000, we now offer an average of 18 courses in 12 departments, across two Faculties, in Irish and Irish-Canadian subjects; our prestigious Irish public lecture series, which has attracted more than 120 distinguished scholars and public figures, including the former Prime Minister of Ireland and Nobel Poet Laureate, Seamus Heaney; the highly-regarded annual Peter O'Brien Visiting Scholar; and 20 fully-funded Canadian Irish Studies Foundation scholarships to worthy students every year.

***- Michael Di Grappa,
President, Concordia University***

I wish to thank the entire Board of Trustees and the many supporters of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation for the generous support provided over the years. Our thanks also to Michael Kenneally who has worked relentlessly for more than ten years, and continues to do so, to consolidate Canadian Irish Studies at the university. But I want to single out Brian Gallery in particular for his tireless efforts, enthusiasm and unique contribution to the strong academic achievements of Concordia University and the success of its students. He is an example for us all. Thank you, Mr. Gallery.

***- Michael Di Grappa,
President, Concordia University***

Je tiens à préciser que la famille Johnson n'a pas participé à ce projet de chaire d'études irlandaises. Le projet a été parrainé par la Fondation canadienne d'études irlandaises qui a proposé le nom de la « Chaire Johnson » qu'elle considérait comme un symbole de la contribution des Irlandais à l'évolution du Québec.

***- Jean Charest,
Premier Ministre du Québec***